

Testimony in Support of House Bill No. 5391, An Act Concerning Overtime and Fringe Benefits of Resident State Troopers, and Senate Bill No. 288, An Act Concerning Notice of Costs Associated with Resident State Troopers

**Public Safety Committee – Public Hearing
March 4, 2014**

**Matthew W. Hart
Town Manager, Town of Mansfield**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of House Bill No. 5391 and Senate Bill No. 288, which legislation would reduce the amount of money that towns must reimburse the state for the cost of resident state troopers for overtime and fringe benefits from 100% to 70% and require the Comptroller to provide towns with advance notice of any fringe benefit increases for the resident state trooper program.

The resident trooper program certainly provides a valuable service for many of Connecticut's smaller communities. With one sergeant and nine troopers, Mansfield may have the largest contingent of resident troopers in the state. We are very fortunate to have several dedicated and talented troopers working here in Mansfield and within Troop C and the Eastern District.

Like my colleagues around the state, I am concerned about the trooper overtime rate and the fringe benefit rate assessed to participating towns. The overtime rate (100%) is set in statute and needs legislative action, such as that proposed by HB 5391, to amend the rate.

With respect to the fringe benefits rate, the fringe for the troopers has increased from 59.08% in FY 2009/10 to an estimated 93% for FY 2014/15. This rate is more than double the fringe benefit rate we pay for municipal employees. The increase in the fringe is one of the primary reasons that the average cost of a resident trooper working in Mansfield has increased from \$82,638 to \$109,726, nearly 33%, over a five-year period. (Please see the attached spreadsheet for more detail.) This marked increase in cost will prevent me from recommending an additional trooper for next fiscal year and may lead to a future reduction in the number of troopers assigned to Mansfield.

On a related note, the timing of the notice towns receive for the fringe benefits rate has been problematic in the past, as we have received this information well after the completion of our local budget process. For example, we received notice of the FY 2013/14 rate on August 26, 2013, five months after I submitted my proposed budget to the Town Council. We have, however, already received an informal notice of the anticipated benefits rate for next fiscal year. This is a welcome change from past practice and SB 288 would ensure that in the future municipalities receive timely notice of the benefits rate for the following fiscal year.

I encourage the committee to support HB 5391 and SB 288 to address these issues of concern. As I am sure the committee members can appreciate, in order for the resident trooper program to remain viable for Mansfield and other Connecticut communities, the costs need to be manageable and sustainable over the long term.

Town of Mansfield
Resident State Trooper Program - Fringe Benefit Analysis

	Salaries*	Fringe	Overhead**	Subtotal	Reimb. Rate	Total Paid	Fringe %	Fringe Increase Over P/Y
2014-2015 est	9 Troopers 1 Sgt	764,680.86	711,153.20	91,682.31	1,567,516.37	0.70	1,097,261.46	93.00%
2013-2014 est	9 Troopers 1 Sgt	717,905.20	601,963.51	91,681.91	1,411,550.62	0.70	988,085.44	83.85%
2012-2013	9 Troopers 1 Sgt	697,806.52	509,049.86	91,312.18	1,298,168.56	0.70	908,717.99	72.95%
2011-2012	8 Troopers 1 Sgt	662,918.35	421,616.07	81,380.90	1,165,915.32	0.70	816,140.72	63.60%
2010-2011	8 Troopers 1 Sgt	605,459.81	381,924.05	91,789.92	1,079,173.78	0.70	755,421.64	63.08%
2009-2010	7 Troopers 1 Sgt	540,868.12	319,544.89	84,022.54	944,435.55	0.70	661,104.88	59.08%

13/14 Budgeted amount is \$953,210, Budget - Estimated = (\$34,875)

*Salary costs include: base salary, meals, and longevity

**Overhead costs include: telephone, travel, stipends, mv depreciation, supplies, and clothing